

Lesson 7

How to Use the Internet for Family History Research

Introduction

The Internet is a rich source of family history information. Many Web sites have been created to provide help and information. Without leaving your home, you can find research guides; maps; family histories; birth, marriage, and death records; and many other resources. Valuable information about your ancestors is most likely available on the Internet. So how can you find it?

This lesson will introduce you to basic Internet research strategies and some of the best research tools currently available online. This lesson includes information on the following subjects:

- [Internet Genealogy Tools and Links](#)
- [Researching on the Internet](#)
- [Recording and Sharing Your Family History Online](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [Ideas For Teachers](#)
- [Appendix A—Quick Reference Table](#)
- [Appendix B—Original Records Table](#)

Internet Genealogy Tools and Links

The amount, scope, and availability of genealogical information on the Internet is exciting. On the Internet you may be able to access images of your great-grandfather's military records, find a family Bible, or connect with distant relatives. The following online genealogy tools and resources will help you sift through the vast amount of information on the Internet and find the information most valuable to you.

Search Engines

Search engines are some of the most powerful genealogical tools available. An Internet search engine is like a catalog or index to the Web sites available on the Internet. To use a search engine, go to the search engine Web site and enter one or more search terms (the words or phrases that best describe the information you want to find) into the search box. In response, the search engine produces a list of Web pages related to the search terms.

Search engines are not designed specifically for genealogy; they search for whatever words you enter into the search box. By entering the right words into a search engine, you may find Web sites that have cemetery records, pictures, Family Bibles, family organizations, and much more that you didn't know existed. If you do not find what you are searching for, remember that every day people post new information on the Internet. Search again later for the same information.

Which Search Engine Should You Use?

Not all search engines are equally useful. Some index the first few sentences of a Web page only. Others index every word. No search engine indexes everything on the Internet. The following are some of the better search engines for genealogy:

- Google: www.google.com
- Yahoo!: www.yahoo.com
- MSN: www.msn.com
- Ask: www.ask.com
- AltaVista: www.altavista.com

Expert Tip: Try more than one search engine. No single search engine indexes everything that is on the Web.

Many search engines have advertisers who pay to show up at the top of the search results list or to the right of it. Be sure to look past these links for other valuable links.

What Search Terms Should You Use?

Choosing the right search terms will help you find the information you need. Start with the obvious—if you’re looking for general information on Alexander Welch, type “Alexander Welch” in the search field. If you include quotation marks around your search terms in the search box, the search engine will look only for that exact phrase. If you do not include quotation marks, the search engine will look for Web sites that include both “Alexander” and “Welch,” although not necessarily as part of the same name.

You can use multiple search terms to narrow your search, especially if you are searching for a common name, such as John Williams or David Smith. When searching for a common family name, try adding words or phrases such as “genealogy,” “family history,” or “was born” after the name. Place-names, years, record types, names of other family members, and so on can help narrow your search. For example, you could type “Alexander Welch” and “Jefferson County, Illinois.” Or you could type “Alexander Welch” and “census” or “Alexander Welch” and “Anne Protsman.”

Expert Tips: Remember to try alternate spellings, abbreviations, or nicknames. You can also search with or without middle names or initials and so forth.

For additional search tips, go to the help or advanced search section of the search engine Web page.

Directory Sites

An Internet directory site is a categorized and cross-referenced index of links to other Web sites. Genealogy directories are a great way to find links to some of the best genealogical research sites and online databases. The directories listed below are a few of the most helpful genealogy directories:

- **Cyndi's List** (www.cyndislist.com) contains links to specific records and Web sites for finding people, places, and dates. You can search the index alphabetically or by topic or by using the site's search engine.
- **Genealogy.com** (www.genealogy.com/links/) contains links to Web sites organized by subject.
- **Genealogylinks.net** (www.genealogylinks.net) consists of many free genealogy links for the United States and several other countries. You can browse the list of links by region.

Expert Tip: *Keep an organized list of sites you would like to return to later. One way to do this is to use the Bookmark or Favorites feature on your Internet browser to mark a site for future use.*

Compiled Information

Many individuals and families have placed genealogical information on the Internet containing the names of deceased ancestors. It is generally a good research strategy to begin your Internet research by seeing if someone else has already compiled information about your ancestor.

Compiled records include family histories, electronic family trees, and local histories (county, state, and so on). Compiled information is usually based on information found in original records, such as birth, marriage, or death certificates. Because errors can be introduced when information is compiled from original records, the original records are often more reliable than compiled records.

Compiled information provides a good starting point for your research and often includes many clues of where to look for new information. Whenever possible, however, you should try to corroborate information you find on the Internet with other records.

Expert Tip: *While primary records are often the most reliable records, they also can contain errors or reflect the bias of the person who created the record. Or they may give an account of an event that is limited by the observer's point of view. Secondary records sometimes correct these kinds of errors; sometimes, however, secondary records will simply perpetuate an error in an earlier record. As much as possible, try to corroborate information from both primary and secondary records. (See the definitions of primary and secondary records in the glossary to this lesson.)*

Online Family Trees

Online family trees are searchable family databases, often displayed as pedigree charts and family group records. They have been posted on the Internet by individuals and organizations throughout the world and often contain many generations of a lineage and include valuable dates and even cite sources for that information.

These are some of the best sites for finding online family trees:

- **FamilySearch** (www.familysearch.org) is the official family history Web site of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is always free. Here you can find online family trees in the Ancestral File and the Pedigree Resource File.
- **RootsWeb** (www.rootsweb.com) is a free genealogy site. Be sure to click the **Family Trees** link before you begin your search for online family trees.
- **Ancestry** (www.ancestry.com) is currently the largest commercial family history site and charges a fee for access to most of its information. Some areas of the site are available for free, however, including the Ancestry World Tree (www.ancestry.com/trees/awt), an online family tree. You can also access the entire site free of charge at all family history centers. To find a family history center, go to www.familysearch.org and find the shaded area titled **Find a Family History Center Near Your Home**. Enter the state where you reside in the appropriate field, and click **OK**.
- **OneGreatFamily** (www.onegreatfamily.com) is a fee-based online database. After you enter what you already know about your ancestors, this automated search engine will continually look for additional information and additional ancestors and notify you when additional information is received.
- **MyTrees** (www.mytrees.com) (formerly KindredKonnections) is a fee-based online family tree. However, you can also obtain access by performing a service for the company. The Web site has a large online family tree, which contains information submitted by individuals around the world, but a large concentration of contributors is from Utah.

***Expert Tip:** Be sure to track the footnotes and sources if they are included in the online family trees you find. These sources often lead to additional information about your ancestors and also help you evaluate its accuracy.*

Family Web Sites

Web sites put together by individuals or families can also contain valuable compiled information. You can find many of these pages by entering a family name in a search engine. If you have a common family name, add search terms such as “genealogy” or “family history” to your family name in the search box. The following Web sites are also great resources for finding family Web sites:

- **RootsWeb** (www.rootsweb.com) Click **Web sites**, and then look alphabetically for your family name.
- **FamilySearch** (www.familysearch.org) Click **Search**, and then click **Search Family History Web sites** to begin your search.
- **genealogy.com family finder** (www.genealogy.com/iffatop.html) Enter the name of the ancestor you are seeking. In the results, click **Family Web sites** to take advantage of this index to thousands of Web sites that include family Web pages.

Online Books

Another way to find compiled information is through books that have been scanned and posted online. These books may include family histories, biographies, and local histories. Because full-text searching is often available, you may be able to find a reference to your ancestor in a book that may have been more difficult to find if you were just reading the book.

The following sites are great resources for online genealogy books:

- **BYU Family History Archive** (www.lib.byu.edu/fhc) contains online images of published family history books from the Family History Library and BYU.
- **Google book search** (books.google.com) contains books scanned by several large research libraries. You can view all the pages of books in the public domain, but if a book is still protected by copyright, only limited access is given.
- **HeritageQuest Online** (www.heritagequestonline.com) contains thousands of books and other online collections. These resources are completely searchable.

Original Records

After searching compiled information to see what other researchers may have already discovered about your ancestor, you can verify that information and add to it by using original records or record indexes available online.

Original records contain both primary and secondary information (see the definition for primary and secondary records in the glossary). For example, census records are original records. They are secondary sources of birth and marriage information, but they are primary sources of information regarding where a family or individual lived at the time of the census.

The chart below shows the time period covered by some types of original records. It also lists what information you might glean from those records and gives links to Web sites that allow you to access these records. The availability of certain records varies from state to state. This list is not comprehensive.

Record Type	What you may learn about your ancestor	Links
Birth records	Full name Birth date and place Parents' name (including mother's maiden name) Home address	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.vitalrec.com• www.ancestry.com• userdb.rootsWeb.com/births/• home.att.net/~wee-monster/vitalrecords.html
Cemetery records	Individual's name Birth date Death date Family members buried in the same cemetery Children who died young and were not listed in other records	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• userdb.rootsWeb.com/cemeteries/• www.findagrave.com• www.cemeteryjunction.com• www.ancestry.com• www.interment.net• www.rootsweb.com/~cemetery/
Census records	Names of family members during a census year Ancestor's town or county of	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• userdb.rootsWeb.com/cemeteries/• www.familysearch.org• www.genealogy.com

	residence (which can lead to other vital records of a town or county) State of birth for ancestor and his or her parents Other information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.ancestry.com • www.heritagequestonline.com • home.att.net/~wee-monster/censuslinks.html
Death records	Full name at death Death date Death place Home address Age at death Birth date Birthplace Occupation Marital status Parents' names Parents' birthplaces Name of funeral home or cemetery Name of the informant and relationship between the informant and the deceased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • userdb.rootsWeb.com/deaths/ • www.vitalrec.com • www.ancestry.com • home.att.net/~wee-monster/deathrecords.html
Funeral home records	Death date and place Names of ancestor's parents Burial place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.funeralnet.com • www.switchboard.com • www.google.com
Immigration records:	Names and birth years of immediate and some extended family members (if they were part of the immigration group) Place emigrated from Place immigrated to Occupation Other information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.cyndislist.com/immigrant.htm • immigrants.byu.edu • www.ellisland.org • castlegarden.org/ • home.att.net/~wee-monster/ei.html
Land records:	Names of some immediate family members Names of deceased family members Surnames of married daughters Occupation Place of Residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • userdb.rootsWeb.com/landrecords/ • www.blm.gov/nhp/search.htm • www.netronline.com
Marriage records	Marriage date and place Names of bride, groom, and parents (including maiden names) County of residence at the time of marriage Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.vitalrec.com • www.ancestry.com • userdb.rootsWeb.com/marriages/ • home.att.net/~wee-monster/vitalrecords.html
Military records:	Record of military service Names of immediate family members Date and place of birth Date and place of marriage Date and place of death Physical description Physician's report Spouse's surname upon remarriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • userdb.rootsWeb.com/military/ • www.cyndislist.com/military.htm • www.nara.gov • www.ancestry.com • home.att.net/~wee-monster/military.html
Obituary	Birth, marriage, death, and burial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.switchboard.com

records	information Names of family members Occupation Membership in religious or charity groups Biographical information Places of residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.ancestry.com • www.usgenWeb.com • userdb.rootsWeb.com/obituaries/
Social Security Death Index	Name at time of death Full birth date Social Security number State of residence where Social Security was issued Death month and year Place where last benefit was sent Clues leading to the Social Security application where more information can be obtained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.familysearch.org • www.ancestry.com • ssdi.rootsweb.com/
Wills and Probate records	Names of immediate and extended family members Date and place of death Names of deceased family members Surnames of married daughters Religion Burial Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.cyndislist.com/wills.htm • www.netronline.com

Reference Tools and Other Helps

You can find hundreds of valuable genealogical reference tools on the Internet, including maps, dictionaries, research guides, and library catalogs.

Maps. Because most records are kept, stored, cataloged, and retrieved according to geographic localities, it is vital to know precisely where your ancestor lived. Keep in mind that older maps may also be very important in genealogical research. Be careful to look at the date of maps you use, because boundaries may have changed from the time when your ancestor lived there. You may want to use a gazetteer first to determine where the place is located and then go to the appropriate map. Excellent resources for maps on the Internet include:

- **Search engines** (images.google.com). Enter a place-name with the word “map,” and available maps are often quickly displayed. For example, if you are researching in New York, you could enter “New York maps” in the search box. Or if you want a more specific map, you might want to try something like “colonial New York maps” or “New York counties map” as search terms. There are also Web sites made specifically for maps, such as www.mapblast.com and www.mapquest.com.
- **Geographic Names Information System** (geonames.usgs.gov/). This Web site links to specific maps. Search for populated places, rivers, mountains, woods, and geographic features, including schools. This site is especially helpful when you are looking for historic places or for places with names that have been changed over the years. If you

find a match for your query, links to a number of maps may be displayed as well as aerial photographic images and information on the topography.

Expert Tip: If you omit the word “map” from a specific village search, you may find pictures of churches, cemeteries, or other points of interest.

If you use the surname you are researching and “cemeteries” as search criteria, this site may provide you with a list of family burial grounds and their locations. Do not check the “Exact Match” box, if one is available, because spellings of place names often vary.

Gazetteers. A gazetteer is a dictionary or index of place-names. Gazetteers often provide a brief history of a place and can assist in narrowing down the location of a place-name. For example, you may find a record stating your ancestor was born in New Paltz, but you are not sure what state New Paltz is in. A national gazetteer might locate New Paltz in Ulster County, New York.

- **Geographic Names Information System** (geonames.usgs.gov/). Besides providing maps, this site also provides a helpful gazetteer. It identifies the U.S. state or territory where a place is located and provides a brief history and a list of name variations. This site is especially helpful when the names of places have changed over time.
- **Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names Online** (www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/vocabularies/tgn/). This online gazetteer is useful for identifying the jurisdiction for a place, such as a county in the United States. It will help you if you know the name of a city but not its county. It also lists historical name variants for a place. It does not include listings for smaller places.

How-to-Guides. Research outlines, step-by-step guides, and research guidance are available at www.familysearch.org for hundreds of worldwide locations and topics. Click the **Library** tab at the top of the page. Next click **Education**, and then click **Family History Library Publications** or **Research Guidance** (on the left of the screen).

The screenshot shows the FamilySearch website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for HOME, SEARCH, SHARE, LIBRARY, and Sign On. Below this, a secondary navigation bar includes links for Family History Library, Family History Centers, Family History Library Catalog, and Education. The main content area is titled 'FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY PUBLICATIONS'. On the left, a sidebar lists categories: Education and Training, Family History Library Classes, Family History Library Publications (which is highlighted), and Research Guidance. The main text area states: 'The staff at the Family History Library has produced the following types of doc family history research. Click below to see a list of the documents.' It then lists two items: 'Forms' and census work sheets are helpful in recording research finding, and 'Letter-writing guides' provide information for how to write letters requer from non-English speakers and provides some non-English translations.

Genealogy Courses. A selection of classes and courses that may help you in your efforts are listed below. They may be useful for general knowledge or for tutorials to assist in specific types of research.

- **Introduction to Family History** (261.byu.edu). This Web site has an eight-part introductory course in family history, based on resources available through The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It teaches how to gather information, enter it on a computer program, do simple research, find library locations, and share information with others.
- **BYU Ancestors** (byubroadcasting.org/ancestors/). This Web site is a companion to the Public Broadcasting System family history series named *Ancestors*. It has information on many family history resources, including sound bites from expert genealogists. It includes a four-part series of lessons.
- **Cyndi's List Education** (www.cyndislist.com/educate.htm). In the education section of Cyndi's List, you will find a wide selection of resources, including conferences, home study courses, information on accreditation, and many general resources for family history education.
- **genealogy.com genealogy classes** (www.genealogy.com/university.html). This site has a wide selection of free genealogy classes. They cover a range of subjects from starting Internet research to tracing immigrant ancestors and European resources. Also found at this site are classes for online research.
- **BYU Independent Study** (ce.byu.edu/is/). This Web site is the Brigham Young University Independent Study Web site. Included among many other subjects are a range of free online family history courses. European research is the major focus, along with some basic classes in family history.
- **The National Genealogical Society** (www.ngsgenealogy.org). This Web site offers suggestions for beginners and several online courses.

Message Boards. Genealogy message boards allow you to post and reply to messages from other users and review the flow of a discussion on a particular genealogy topic. Message boards are also known as discussion groups or query databases. You can post and review answers to questions about specific surnames and locations and other research topics. Some message boards are available at:

- **RootsWeb** (boards.ancestry.com/mbexec/script/main/rw). This Web site has free message boards. You can search by surname, locality, or topic.
- **GenForum** (www.genforum.com/). Using the message boards at genealogy.com you can search by surname, region, and general topics. This site also has a "Forum Finder," which allows you to find a message board by entering a search term or phrase.
- **Cyndi's List** (www.cyndislist.com/queries.htm). Cyndi's List has many helpful links to additional message boards.
- **Surname Helper** (surhelp.rootsweb.com/srchall.html). This Web site is a surname engine for finding queries and surname registrations posted on various genealogy sites. This is a great way to search thousands of query databases.

Expert Tip: When you post information or contact other people, you can improve your chance of getting a response by letting them know you also have information you are willing to share with them.

Mailing Lists

Mailing lists allow you to participate in or monitor specific genealogical or historical discussions by e-mail. The mailing list system allows people to send e-mail about a particular topic to one address, which is then copied and sent to all of the other subscribers on the mail list. You can join a mailing list to learn more about a specific family, region, and so on. Many mailing lists also have archives that allow you to see past messages. Links to mailing lists are found at:

- **RootsWeb** (lists.rootsweb.com/). RootsWeb has thousands of free genealogy mailing lists from which to choose.
- **Cyndi's List** (www.cyndislist.com/mailling.htm). This Web site provides links to many mailing lists.

Expert Tip: If you can't find a message board or mailing list for your surname or region, consider creating your own!

Other Resources. Other online resources can be useful in your family history work. The following ideas may help:

- **RootsWeb Surname List** (rsl.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/rslsq1.cgi). RootsWeb lists over one million surnames, with an indication of who is researching those names. You can easily find others working on the same family names from the same areas where your ancestors lived.
- **FamilySearch** collaboration lists (www.familysearch.org/Eng/Share/Collaborate/frameset_share.asp).
- **Roots Location List** (searches.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/Genea/rll). This tool will help you search places and find others working in the same area. Because this tool does full-text searches, a query for UT (Utah) will retrieve records for Putnam (pUTnam) and other places as well.
- **Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness** (www.raogk.org). This Web site can help you find a list of volunteers who are willing to help you with your particular research topic without charging for their service.
- **Cyndi's List** (www.cyndislist.com/lookups.htm). This tool can help you find other volunteers and free assistance.
- **Online telephone directories.** Get contact information for other researchers from one of these online phone directories:
 - **Infobel:** www.infobel.com/teldir/
 - **Bigfoot:** www.bigfoot.com
 - **Yahoo! People Search:** www.people.yahoo.com/

Researching on the Internet

Millions of people search for their ancestors. Some of them may even be searching for the same individuals you are. The Internet is a useful tool for finding and collaborating with others who are seeking the same, or similar, information. It allows you to share information, resources, and strategies. Collaborating with others, you are more likely to succeed in your search.

See If Others Have Already Done Research on Your Family Line

Generally, the most efficient way to start a family history project is to determine if others have already researched your family line. Many genealogists, genealogical organizations, and genealogical businesses share their findings on the Internet. Most genealogists make their records available free of charge. Genealogical businesses often charge a fee or subscription rate for their database information.

Begin your search with online databases. Check the section of this lesson titled “Electronic Family Trees” to see Web site addresses of several excellent Internet sites where you can search. These sites contain research other people have submitted on their family lines.

Be Persistent

The key to a successful Internet search is to be thorough and persistent. Read the screens carefully, and follow links that appear to be relevant to your search.

Expert Tip: *Once you have found useful information, copy and store the information and the link to its source. Be sure to record the Web address in your research. Sources are important. They allow you and others to know how to continue the work you have started.*

Search Using a Variety of Methods

Whether you use a search engine or search a specific Web site, finding information on the Internet almost always requires you to type in search terms. Try all the methods listed below to find as much information as possible. You can search for:

- The name of a person or family.
- The location where a person lived, married, resided, and died.
- The type of record you are looking for (birth, marriage, and death records; wills; land records; and so on.)
- The time period (the time a family or individual lived in a given area).
- An event in a person’s life, such as a birth, marriage, or death of a family member.
- A topic, such as the Civil War, the Great Depression, immigration records, and so on.

Expert Tips:

- **Search for uncommon names first.** *If John Smith married Hortense Frinzwalter, don’t search for John Smith—search for Hortense Frinzwalter. If David Brown had a brother Eliphalet Brown, search for Eliphalet first. Then you may find David on the same page.*

- **Use the search “help” feature.** The help feature may be hidden in a link called “Advanced Search.” Find out what options you have in searching. You may be able to use special search symbols such as ““, *, ?, and so on to narrow your search.
- **Read the screen.** Take time to read all of the available options on the screen. Be sure you know exactly what database is being searched. This will help you avoid many simple mistakes. Also, be sure to look for valuable information, such as the listed sources for information contributed by other researchers.
- **Avoid “exact” searches.** For example, if you enter a year, ALWAYS select “range of years” or “+ or –” years. Years are often estimated, approximated, or incorrectly reported. When searching on a name, remember that spelling variations are very common. For example, the last name DIANG could be spelled DIAN, DEAN, or TIAN.
- **Don’t get sidetracked.** It is easy to get off on a tangent when researching on the Internet. Have a clear objective in mind as you search for information (such as finding your great-grandmother’s birth, marriage, or death date). You may want to keep a list of other interesting sites you find along the way (such as local histories, recipes, and so on) so you can visit them later.
- **Don’t stop just because you succeed!** One common mistake is to stop searching when you find something. It’s tempting to find something about your ancestor and consider your search a success. If you continue your searches with other search methods or using other search criteria, you may find additional information or previously unknown family members. Some sites are continually improving, adding new information. Checking back in six months or a year could lead to additional information and clues.

Keep a Research Log

As you search online, use a research log to keep track of the family history information you search for on the Internet. In your research log, be sure to include the following:

- The name of the ancestor you are researching.
- The information you find (or don’t find).
- The sources or Web site addresses (URLs) you searched in hopes of finding the information you wanted.
- The date of your search. Web sites are often updated and should be rechecked periodically.

A research log will help you keep from duplicating your efforts. With a good research log, you can return easily to useful resources and avoid returning to those online resources that have little useful information. A research log can be kept on paper or electronically in the notes of your genealogy database or in a file, such as a word processor document.

Recording and Sharing Your Family History Online

Sharing your family history on the Internet improves your ability to collaborate with others. Distant relatives may contact you and share their information. You might have key information

that another person needs to connect an ancestral line. Collaborating with others also helps avoid duplication of effort and makes the work even more enjoyable.

Recording your family history on the Internet also helps preserve your work: because your information is recorded on the Internet, you will still have it if something happens to the files on your home computer.

How to Post your Family History Information on the Internet

Once you get to the point that you have enough documented research to share with other researchers and family members, follow the steps below to post your information on the Internet:

- 1. Enter your data into a database (including sources).** Pick a program that meets your needs (for example, Personal Ancestral File, Legacy, FamilyTreeLegends, The Master Genealogist, RootsMagic). If you want to publish a Web site, consider whether the program creates Web pages and what those pages look like.
- 2. Create a GEDCOM of everything you want to put on the Internet.** See the instructions provided with your genealogy software for more information on how to create a GEDCOM. (Note: Be sure to record where you save it and what you named it!)
- 3. Upload your file to a Web site that accepts GEDCOM files.** Many of the following sites are visited thousands of times each day and are easily accessible by others. The following sites are a few of the best:
 - **Pedigree Resource File** (www.familysearch.org). The Pedigree Resource File (PRF) is available online and on CD-ROMs or DVDs. It consists of family data, including notes and sources. To share your records using PRF, go to www.familysearch.org and click the **Share** tab; then click **Share My Genealogy**, and follow the instructions that are given. You must register to submit files, but the registration is free.
 - **Ancestry.com Ancestry World Tree** (www.ancestry.com/trees/awt/). Ancestry.com allows you to upload your family records to their Web site and to download family records submitted by others.
 - **OneWorldTree** (www.ancestry.com/search/rectype/trees/owt/). Ancestry.com has gathered family trees and family history records for millions of people. One benefit of this site is that you can add and change information after it has been submitted. You can also find valuable information submitted by other researchers. Others can contact you through ancestry.com (without your having to reveal your name or e-mail address). There is not a fee to submit your family records; however, others must subscribe to ancestry.com and pay a fee to access what you have submitted.
 - **OneGreatFamily Tree** (www.onegreatfamily.com). The OneGreatFamily Tree requires the payment of a fee. Once you submit your family records, OneGreatFamily automatically matches the information you submit to information submitted by others in their database. The Web site notifies users via e-mail of new matches as they occur. OneGreatFamily encourages collaboration with relatives and others through their data system.

Expert Tips: *If you are good at using a computer, you may choose to post your genealogy yourself by creating your own Web site. Creating your own Web page for your family history information allows you to have full control of your information.*

Go to help.surnameweb.org/tutorial/gedcom.html to learn about programs that create genealogy Web pages, and see the Genealogy Home Page Tutorial. A free service to help you create a Web site is found at www.familytreeguide.com/home_index.php?sid=surnameweb

Once your site is completed, be sure to promote your Web pages by notifying key sites such as CyndisList, Genealogy SiteFinder, FamilySearch Internet, Google, GenealogyLinks.net, and so on.

Glossary

Ancestral File: A record of genealogies submitted by people throughout the world and kept by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This file contains information submitted between 1980 and 2000. The information, mostly about people who have died, is linked into pedigrees to show both ancestors and descendants of individuals. An effort was made to combine or merge duplicate submissions so that each individual would appear in the file only once. This file contains over 35 million names. The Ancestral File is available at www.familysearch.org.

Bookmarks or Favorites: A menu option that keeps track of Web sites that you have marked as useful so you can return at a later time, much like a traditional bookmark is used for books.

Compiled Records: Compiled records are information put together by individuals, often using original records or personal knowledge of events. Compiled records are often published in a family history book or kept in a computer database.

Family History Centers: Locations where some of the resources of the Family History Library are available or can be ordered. Nearly 5,000 family history centers are located around the world.

GEDCOM: GEnealogy **DATA COM**munications. GEDCOM is a file format for genealogy data. Developed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, GEDCOM is a text format that genealogy programs use to exchange data with other genealogy programs. Files are stored as characters that support the diacritical marks of foreign languages.

Genealogy Database: Information recorded on a computer about families and the events in their lives. The database typically contains names, dates, and places of birth, marriage, and death. A good genealogy database also allows recording the source of each piece of information.

Internet Filter: Software that prevents selected words or Web sites from being displayed on your computer, often to protect you or your children from inappropriate content, such as pornography, profanity, vulgarity, hate, or violence.

Pedigree Resource File: A record of genealogies submitted by people throughout the world in electronic form since May 1999 and kept by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Unlike the Ancestral File, it (1) contains notes and source documentation, which vary in thoroughness and accuracy, and (2) no effort was made to avoid duplication or to allow updating of previously submitted information. If the submitter has additional information, he or she can resubmit the data, but some individuals will appear multiple times in the Pedigree Resource File.

PERSI: PERiodical **SOURCE** Index is a comprehensive subject index covering genealogy and local history periodicals written in English and French (Canada) since 1800. The database contains more than 1.6 million citations from over 6,000 titles. It is available to libraries through HeritageQuest Online and is produced in cooperation with the Allen County Public Library Foundation.

Primary Records: Records that were recorded at an event or close to the time it happened by a person who was present at the event. Some examples of primary records are birth or baptism records, marriage records, and ship passenger lists.

Research Log: A tracking log listing sources consulted and what was found or not found in each source.

Search Engine: A Web site used to search the Web by entering a keyword or phrase. Examples of search engines are Google or Yahoo. Search engines find matches on the Internet for the text you enter in the search field and make it possible for you to visit the Web page that contains the text.

Secondary Records: Records that were not recorded at the time of the event by a witness or participant in the event.

Web Sites: A collection of pages or files on the World Wide Web that are linked together. The pages of a Web site are generally related in content.

Ideas for Teachers

This lesson contains too much information to cover in one class period. It would be better to take two or three weeks to cover the materials, especially if you plan to give students hands-on experience with some of the Web sites mentioned in the lesson.

Because this class focuses on Internet Web sites, you should teach this class where you will have easy access to the Internet. You can then demonstrate what each site looks like and what can be done there. If you can, allow students time to look up information about their families on a few of the sites discussed in this lesson.

Teaching Goals

- Help students become aware of genealogical research tools and Web sites available on the Internet.
- Provide a hands-on experience for the students to use some family history Internet sites.
- Encourage students to use some of the Internet resources while doing their own research.
- Teach students how to submit their own genealogy to one or more of the Internet databases mentioned in this lesson.

Preparing to Teach

- A week before you teach this class, ask a few class members to provide you with information about their own families. Spend time during the week checking some of the databases you will discuss in class to see if you can find anything about their families. As you teach your class, use what you found about these families to illustrate what is available on the Internet.
- You may want to prepare a handout for your class that provides some of the most popular and useful Internet sites and databases discussed in this lesson. Students can take this handout home and experiment using some of these Web sites on their own time. Appendix A and Appendix B can be printed or copied for use as handouts.
- If a computer system and projector are not available in your classroom, you can use paper printouts (handouts) showing the information that is found on the Web sites you discuss.
- Find out what resources are available to you. Be prepared to share this information with class members. For example, see if a local college offers Internet genealogy classes or if there is a family history organization in your town. Some family history libraries, family history centers, and community libraries allow users free access to genealogy services, including those that require fees.

Teaching Ideas

During the first class

- Provide a brief overview of what can be found on the Internet. During this overview, don't get into the details of how to use the tools and sites discussed in the lesson material.

You are simply providing an overview. The details of each tool and feature will be discussed later in this lesson and in following lessons. The overview portion of this lesson should last about 10 minutes.

- After providing a brief overview, focus the remainder of the class on the first two sections of the lesson.
- Using information you gathered about some of the students' families, begin doing searches using the tools discussed in these two sections of the lesson.
- If time and the classroom setting allow, give students the opportunity to conduct searches on their own family lines, using one of the Web sites or databases discussed in the lesson.
- At the end of the class, provide the class with a handout showing a brief description of what sites are available to them and what information they can find on these sites. (Appendixes A and B can be printed or copied for use as handouts.)
- Provide students a few minutes at the end of class to ask questions.

During the second class

- Focus this lesson on discussing the materials in the remaining sections of the lesson.
- Demonstrate how to find messages listed on a message board, how to see what others have found about the families of class members, and how to submit genealogy to an online database, such as FamilySearch or another Internet genealogy site.
- After reviewing the information in this section, give class members an opportunity to visit some of the online sites and message boards that might contain information about their families.
- Help students understand the value of sharing the information with others through the Internet. Help them see how easy it is to submit their genealogy to a genealogy database.
- If you did not provide handouts during the first class, give class members handouts after this lesson. Students should use these handouts during the week to explore different genealogy sites. (Appendixes A and B can be printed or copied for use as handouts.)
- Provide students a few minutes at the end of class to ask questions.

Internet Activities

Below are a few ideas for activities you could use to help students become more familiar with family history Internet Web sites. These activities may be even more interesting to the class if you prepare them using information about the family of one of your students.

- **Scavenger Hunt:** Prepare a list of questions that can be answered using some of the Internet sites discussed in the lesson. Have the students complete the questions during class time. To do the hunt during class time, provide as a hint the Internet URL that contains the answer. This activity can help students become familiar with some commonly used sites. It could also be a homework assignment.
- **Figure It Out:** Prepare a family history problem that can be solved by accessing information on three or four Internet sites. You could have students find the birth date

and place, death date and place, spouse, and children of an individual. (Everyone should work on the same family history problem during class time.) For students who are learning about more advanced research methods, prepare a family history problem that would include searching wills, land and probate records, or military or immigration records. Be sure you have obtained an answer yourself to the family history problem before presenting the problem to your class.

- **Match the Record:** Show copies of records that you retrieved from Internet sites. Have your students determine where each record that you show could have been found. Give a list (either as a handout or displayed in class) of the Internet sites you used, so students have Internet sites from which to select an answer. This activity could be used to introduce Internet sites. Then you could discuss the types of records found at each site. The activity could also be used as a review at the end of class or at the beginning of a subsequent class.

Appendix A

Quick Reference Table

Tools or Tasks	What to Search for	Some Sites to Try
Use Search Engines	<p>Search for an ancestor, a book, or almost anything. Use these to search the Internet for almost any genealogical need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for an ancestor by name or a family surname. • Search for biographies, and family histories by author or title. • Search for tools, such as maps and gazetteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.google.com • www.yahoo.com • www.msn.com • www.altavista.com • www.ask.com
Use Genealogical Directories	<p>Search for links to genealogical Web sites. Genealogical directories have links to many different genealogical sites. Link to sites about an ancestor, about regional research, about an ethnic group, or just about any genealogical topic you can think of.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.cyndislist.com (250,000 links by title or topic) • www.genealogy.com/links/ (50,000 links by subject) • www.ngsgenealogy.org/links.cfm
Find Compiled Records	<p>Search for already compiled genealogies. Look first to see if someone else has already compiled a genealogy about any of your family lines. You may find pedigrees that link generations of your family. (These may or may not be accurate.)</p>	<p>Electronic family trees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.familysearch.org • www.rootsWeb.com • www.ancestry.com
Find Original Records	<p>Search for an ancestor's birth, marriage, death, census or other records. Look for many public records made by governments or churches at the time your ancestor lived. These are keys to documenting your ancestor's lives. You should know the name and the approximate date and place of an event.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.vitalrec.com • www.ancestry.com • www.familysearch.org
Find Family Web Sites	<p>Search for Web Sites about your family. A distant relative may have created a Web site with</p>	<p>See the search engines at top of this column.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.rootsWeb.com • www.kuijsten.de/navigator/ • www.cyndislist.com/personal.htm

	information about your ancestors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.Familysearch.org (Click on Search and then Search family History Web Sites _ • www.genealogy.com/ifftop.html
Work with Others	Find other people researching your family lines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use mailing lists, message boards, or other lists to find and collaborate with others researching your same family lines. • Post messages, queries, and replies. 	Mailing Lists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.lists.rootsWeb.com • www.cyndislist.com/mailling.htm Message Boards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.boards.ancestry.com/bexec/script/main/rw • www.genforum.genealogy.com/ • www.cyndislist.com/queries.htm
Share your Information	Share your family information online. Put your genealogical research into an electronic format, and post it where others can see it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedigree Resource File at www.familysearch.org • OneWorldTree at www.ancestry.com/search/rectype/trees/owt/ • www.onegreatfamily.com
Find Tools	Find reference tools, such as maps, gazetteers, and dictionaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.images.google.com (maps) • www.geonames.ugs.gov/pls/gnispublish/ (places) • www.dictionary.com • www.wikipedia.ccm
Find Instructions	Find step-by-step instructions. Look for guidance on hundreds of topics and specific areas of research (such as military records or California records) or skills (such as reading old handwriting).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.familysearch.org (Look under Search, then Research Guidance or Research Helps)
Find Online Genealogy Courses	Find online and other genealogical courses. There are classes for beginners and many expert topics as well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 261.byu.edu (Introduction to Family History) • www.cyndislist.com/educate.htm • www.genealogy.com/university.html • ce.byu.edu/is/genealogy/
Find Online Books	Find histories, biographies, and local histories. Many can be read on the Internet. You can search for family names and places where your ancestors lived.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.heritagequestonline.com • www.lib.byu.edu/fhc • www.usgenWeb.org

Appendix B

Original Records Table

	Birth records	Cemetery records	Census records	Death records	Funeral home records	Immigration records	Land records	Marriage records	Military records	Obituary records	Social Security Death Index	Wills and Probate records
Ancestral information			X	X	X							
Biographical information	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Birth date	X	X		X					X	X	X	
Birthplace	X			X					X	X		
Burial place		X			X				X	X		
Children		X	X			X			X	X		X
Death date		X		X	X				X	X	X	X
Death place				X	X				X	X		X
Father's name	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		
Full name	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Family members		X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X
Marriage date								X	X	X		
Marriage place								X	X	X		
Military service									X			
Mother's maiden name	X			X				X	X	X		
Occupation			X	X		X	X			X		
Physical description						X			X			
Social Security number											X	
Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of record types. It provides only an overview of what might typically be found in these records.												